



Breaking Down Barriers to Substance Use Treatment

H.R. 3925, 116th Congress

Sponsors: Reps. Paul Tonko (D-NY), David McKinley (R-WV)

"The devastation of America's opioid crisis has touched every part of our country, and access to treatment is a matter of life and death. Our national response needs to rise to meet the unprecedented scale of this crisis."

❖ Paul Tonko

America is in the grip of an overdose epidemic

- **70,237 people died of an overdose** in America in 2017, more than automotive & gun deaths combined
- Overdose fatalities are now **the leading cause of death for Americans under 50**
- Americans are **dying from this illness faster than they did at the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic** that sparked a national movement to address it
- **Just 1 in 5 individuals** with an opioid use disorder is getting the treatment they need

Access to treatment is a life-saving answer

- The U.S. Surgeon General has called medication-assisted treatment (MAT) with methadone, buprenorphine, or naltrexone the 'gold-standard' of treatment for opioid use disorder.
- People actively engaged in MAT are up to 50% less likely to die of an opioid overdose
- Unfortunately, many state Medicaid programs impose arbitrary barriers to MAT that require health care providers to exhaustively document patient compliance with urine screens, behavioral counseling, or mandatory tapering plans, despite a lack of evidence that these policies are providing clinical benefit
- Prioritizing paperwork over patients means these policies delay care and exacerbate our overdose crisis
- 43% of substance use treatment programs in states without utilization restrictions provide access to life-saving and cost-effective buprenorphine. This falls to 17% in states with prior authorization requirements.

Congress can help stop this crisis!

The Reducing Barriers to Substance Use Treatment Act

- Prohibits state Medicaid programs from imposing onerous utilization management techniques—including prior authorization requirements—on medication-assisted treatments for opioid use disorder
- This requirement would be time-limited and tied to the existing statutory requirement that state Medicaid programs offer all three forms of MAT through 2025.

Supporting Organizations: *AIDS United, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, American Society of Addiction Medicine, CADA of Northwest Louisiana, Central City Concern, Connecticut Certification Board, Faces and Voices of Recovery, National Alliance for Medication Assisted (NAMA) Recovery, National Council for Behavioral Health, National Safety Council, Illinois Association of Behavioral Health, National Association for Behavioral Healthcare, National Health Care for the Homeless Council, Partnership for Drug Free Kids + Center of Addiction, Shatterproof, SMART Recovery, The American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine, The Kennedy Forum, Treatment Communities of America, Young People in Recovery*

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